



# FACT SHEET

**Rotary** unites people from all continents and cultures who take action to deliver real, long-term solutions to our world's most persistent issues. Through volunteering, our 1.2 million members make lifelong friendships that transcend political and cultural boundaries and foster global understanding and respect. In addition to our 35,000 clubs, Rotary also offers expanded service opportunities including:

**Interact** clubs bring together young people ages 12-18 to develop leadership skills while discovering the power of Service Above Self. There are more than 20,300 Interact clubs in 159 countries.

**Rotaract** clubs bring together young adults, starting at age 18, to exchange ideas with leaders in the community, develop leadership and professional skills, and have fun through service.

Solving real problems takes real commitment and vision. Each year, Rotary members invest hundreds of millions of dollars and countless volunteer hours to promote health, peace and prosperity in communities across the globe. Rotary members take action by providing access to [clean water and sanitation](#), supporting [education](#), preventing and treating [disease](#), saving [mothers and children](#) and growing local [economies](#).

## Ending polio

For more than 30 years, Rotary has been the driving force in the effort to [end polio](#) worldwide. Alongside our partners in the [Global Polio Eradication Initiative](#), we have achieved a 99.9 percent reduction in polio cases, with less than 200 cases of wild polio reported in 2019 compared with 350,000 a year in the late 1980s. Our members have contributed \$2.1 billion and countless volunteer hours to protect more than 3 billion children in 122 countries from this paralyzing disease. Today, just two countries continue to report cases of wild poliovirus, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Rotary remains committed to ending polio, and will raise \$50 million per year, with every dollar to be matched with two additional dollars through a matching agreement with the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#).

## History

For 115 years, Rotary members have been addressing challenges around the world. It started with the vision of one man — Paul Harris. The Chicago attorney formed the Rotary Club of Chicago on 23 February 1905, so professionals with diverse backgrounds could exchange ideas, form meaningful, lifelong friendships, and give back to their communities. Rotary's name came from the group's early practice of rotating meetings among the offices of its members.